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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 27 April 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ERDOS (Hungary)

- Statement by the Chairman
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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: The Disarmament Commission concluded the first phase of its work for the current session during the first two days, and a large number of delegations participated in the general exchange of views. Thereafter, the Commission embarked on the second phase of its work, and all four Working Groups began their deliberations on the respective agenda items. During the course of deliberations, various views were expressed and proposals were made by delegations on the subjects under consideration. Some delegations have already submitted to the Commission working papers on different agenda items. I expect that more working papers will be forthcoming during the course of our deliberations in the four Working Groups. In this connection, I ask delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat in good time for processing.

As a result of the consultations with the Chairmen of the Working Groups and extensive discussions at the Bureau meeting which we held last Friday, we started - and have not yet finished - the discussion on this week's working timetable. After we have heard, in accordance with our programme of work, the progress reports of the Chairmen of the Working Groups on the work on the respective agenda items, I shall revert to the matter of the working timetable for the Commission and its Working Groups.

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF WORKING GROUPS

The CHAIRMAN: I call first on the Chairman of Working Group I, on objective information on military matters, Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden.

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): Working Group I is expected to conclude its deliberations on the agenda item entitled "Objective information on military matters" at this session. It has agreed to use the Chairman's paper of last year as the basis for its work. The Working Group has begun its first reading of that paper and is in the process of discussing the text under the subheading "Objectives". The work is being carried out in a constructive atmosphere. However, in view of the fact that the aim is to reach agreement on a text on guidelines and possible recommendations before the end of this session, it has already become obvious that the time at the Working Group's disposal is very short indeed. Whether the Working Group will manage to conclude its task successfully is therefore dependent above all, of course, on the spirit of cooperation prevailing in the group, but also on the self-restraint exercised by delegations in proposing amendments to the current text.

We are trying to achieve consensus, and thus no delegation can expect to have its preferred formulation on every point. By avoiding too many and detailed interventions, the Working Group will be able to deal with the entire text and still have enough time thoroughly to discuss a revised version of it before the conclusion of its work.

Against this background, it is my aim to conclude the first reading as soon as possible. The revised version of the suggested guidelines will then be submitted for the consideration of delegations.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group II, on nuclear disarmament, Ambassador Prakash Shah of India.

Mr. SHAH (India): The Working Group has held four meetings on agenda item 5, relating to the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

At its second meeting, on 23 April, the Group decided: first, that it would base its work on the four agreed subjects presented by the Chairman of the Group at the end of the 1991 session of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/46/42; secondly, that it would proceed to discuss the first two subjects while a core Working Group, open to all interested Member States, elaborated the specific items for discussion under item 3; thirdly, that its report would be structured and presented under these four main subjects and the subheadings which may be elaborated during these discussions; and, fourthly, that Working Group II would cover as many subjects as possible during the 1992 session, and its work would be carried forward during the 1993 session.

Thus the last two meetings were devoted to a general exchange on the first subject, "The relationship between the process of nuclear disarmament and international peace and security". Meanwhile, a core group, chaired by the representative of Egypt, is in the process of elaborating specific items under the third topic, "Strengthening the process of nuclear disarmament, necessary conditions, and mechanisms required for it".

A number of delegations have taken part in the discussions, which have been both procedural and substantive, and there seems to be a genuine concern to discuss all subjects under the agenda item and to seek consensus on as many subjects as possible.

In addition, working papers have been presented by the delegations of Ireland, China and Cuba which drew the interest of the Group.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Peru, Mr. Javier Paulinich, on behalf of the Chairman of Working Group III, on regional approaches to disarmament.

Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Our delegation is pleased to report that Working Group III has begun its work in a constructive spirit. Working Group III has, to date, held three meetings. At the first of these, we agreed that the basis of our deliberations would be the document prepared last year by Ambassador Wisnumurti of Indonesia. At the second and third meetings, we took up the first part of that document, "Relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament". We have moved forward in considering the principles associated with this first part, and we have approved, ad referendum, most of these.

Delegations have shown great interest in the subject, and have participated actively in the deliberations, putting forward proposals for new principles that have enriched our consideration of the subject. In the course of this week, my delegation will endeavour to conclude consideration of the first part of Ambassador Wisnumurti's document, and immediately begin consideration of the subheading, "Principles and guidelines".

Also, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the delegations which are participating in the work of Working Group III for their spirit of cooperation, which, we hope, will continue in the coming weeks.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group IV, on the role of science and technology, Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe of Nigeria.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): Working Group IV, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields, held three meetings last week.

It will be recalled that, last year, there was an understanding that the present session, as well as next year's, would examine this item and make specific recommendations for submission to the Commission. At these meetings, the Working Group devoted time to a general exchange of views, bearing in mind the useful groundwork laid at last year's session.

The Working Group is aware that not all issues will be ripe for specific recommendations to the Commission at this session. Apart from the structured discussions on the four sub-items, substantive statements were made on the working papers that are available to the Group. It is our intention to start detailed examination of these working papers, as well as of those submitted last year, with a view to compiling the papers under four sub-items. Indeed, there appears to be an understanding that we should derive the maximum benefit from the limited time available to us so as to advance our work this year.

The CHAIRMAN: We have completed the first round of reports of progress on various agenda items in the four Working Groups, and I wish to thank the Chairmen for their presentation of these brief but substantive and informative summaries of the results achieved thus far in the Working Groups.

Let me also thank, specifically, Ambassador Azikiwe for his readiness, as I mentioned earlier, to take over Working Group IV and ensure the success of the Disarmament Commission on the questions relating to the role of science and technology we hope to achieve.

(The Chairman)

Let me draw your attention now to the question of the working timetable. As I mentioned at the beginning of this meeting the consultations are still continuing; they have not yet been conclusive. We in the Bureau are trying to take into account the suggestions of the Chairmen of the Working Groups as to how to proceed with the actual needs of the subsidiary working bodies.

I can inform you that, last Friday, we had a lively and detailed discussion in the Bureau on how to proceed on the timetable for this week. Since Working Group I is in a special situation, because this is its last year, we agreed that it should be provided with the necessary extra time for it to complete its activities. We also came to the conclusion that this subsidiary working body, Working Group I, will actually become the yardstick for the other three Groups when the Commission sees to accommodating their needs next year.

On the basis of all these considerations, the consultations are still going on, and I should like to ask the members of the Bureau to stay in this very room after the end of this plenary meeting to continue and, we hope, wind up our discussions on the working timetable so that by this afternoon, members might have a clear picture of how we should proceed during this week.

Again, we are striving to avoid overlap in the meetings of the various Working Groups and to allocate the extra time required for Working Group I. This might sometimes seem irreconcilable, but we shall do our best to come up with an acceptable solution satisfactory to all the Chairmen of the Working Groups.

(The Chairman)

Before adjourning this plenary meeting, I should like to appeal to the members of the Disarmament Commission to make efficient use of the time available to us. Punctuality in attending the scheduled meetings, brevity in presentation and clarity in formulating our suggestions and recommendations are the major requirements before us.

The next plenary meeting, as members can see from our indicative, general programme of work contained in document A/CN.10/1992/CRP.1, will be on Monday, 4 May, which is when we shall hear the second progress reports of the Chairmen of the various Working Groups.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.